


As easy as-- no, really.



standuponit
 [standuponit](#)

<https://standuponit.livejournal.com/2010-12-13> 20:10:00

MOOD: 😊 hungry

MUSIC: The Shins - Spilt Needles

I was talking about the chicken pot pie I was making on Twitter, and it turns out, a lot of people are scared of pastry.

But it's really easy. *Really.*

Every copy of *The Boston Cooking School Cookbook* I have ever seen has the spine broken to Page 600, which is the Plain Pastry recipe. Saint Fannie Farmer defined Plain Pastry as:

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup shortening
- ice water

Pastry is basically a 3:2:1 ratio, by weight. That's three parts flour, two parts fat, and one part liquid. (plus usually a little salt or sugar or both.) This is complicated by the fact that both flour and some of the tastier fats used for baking (like *butter*) can contain an unpredictable amount of water. However, there's an easy way to make this balance.

Historically, pastry ("paste") was used as a sort of improvised baking dish (a "coffin." Those medievals were more morbid than you) and not eaten. Those older pastes were hard and brittle and flavorless.

But these days, we like to eat our pasty. Which means it should be flaky, tender, and flavorful. And wrapped around something delicious.

Your basic pie crust recipe goes like this:

- 12 ounces of flour (preferably pastry flour, but you can use all-purpose or whatever. If you are Mrs. Korolenko, you can even use all-purpose and have it come out as flaky and improbable as if you used pastry flour. But she could also make her all-purpose flour bread come out like she used high-protein bread flour. Some people have the good superpowers. I am using whole wheat pastry flour, which you can mail order from King Arthur if you do not live close enough to Civilization to get it at the grocery.)
- 8 ounces of *fat*. You may use Crisco, butter, lard, schmaltz, duck fat, suet, a combination of the above. If you use margarine, I do not know you. Flavored fats from roasted birds with seasoning are better for savory pies than sweet ones. Different fats will have different effects--butter is flavorful, but shortening or lard make for a flakier crust because of their lower water content. When the crust cooks, what will happen is that the little pearls of fat, in combination with the liquid, will cause the crust's gluten formation to isolate itself into circumscribed flakes, thus lending... well, *flakiness*. This all links up with biscuits, and in the old blog I [talked about biscuits at length](http://cvillette.livejournal.com/32450.html) (<http://cvillette.livejournal.com/32450.html>).
- 4 ounces of ice-cold liquid, *including the liquid in the shortening and flour*. I use vodka, because using alcohol retards gluten formation, resulting in a flakier pie crust.

Now, I hear you wondering, how do you tell how much liquid that is? Listen and be enlightened...

Salt to taste, but about a half teaspoon. Less if you are using salty fat. More if you are not. It's okay to taste raw pastry.

And here's how you make it.

If you have stand mixer, do this in the stand mixer. If not, use your hands. (It helps if, like me, you have cold hands.) You could use two forks, two knives, or a pastry cutter if you were, you know, unnaturally fastidious, but fingertips were good enough for your grandmother! (And Mrs. Korolenko.)

Put in your flour, and your fat, and your salt. The fat should be

fridge-cold. Mix them together until they look like aquarium gravel. (Not the dyed kind.) Then, begin SLOWLY adding your ice-cold liquid (if you were keeping your vodka in the freezer like civilized people, you're already ready) while continuing to mix until the pastry dough just coheres in a lump. You want kind of a tidy lump, or (if you are using a stand mixer) a couple-three tidy lumps. With rounded edges. Not shaggy edges. But not not exactly perfectly smooth either, and *stop as soon as it comes together*.

The secret here is that you can mix the pastry as much as you want before the fluid goes in. Afterward, though, you are racing against The Devil Gluten, and you want to stop as soon as your dough is workable.

Now take your pasty, glob it into a lump, wrap it with parchment or waxed paper or plastic wrap, and stuff it in the fridge for no less than one half of an hour.

When that is done, pull it out. Divide it into two unequal parts--one a bit larger. Say, $\frac{3}{5}$ and $\frac{2}{5}$. You can eyeball this. Precision is not required.

Return the smaller lump to the fridge.

Form the larger lump into a rough sphere.

On a floured surface, using a floured rolling pin, roll out the first lump until it is large enough to line the inside of your pie container with a little bit of excess. If it breaks, it's cool--you can patch it by wetting the edges of a fragment of pastry and sticking them over the crack. Nobody will notice once the pie is inside.

Line your pie dish. Fill your pie. (My pie tonight has chicken, gravy, leeks, potatoes, kohlrabi, garlic, turnips, carrots, wax beans, and parsnips. With rosemary and salt and pepper.)

Roll out a smaller circle to cover. Or you can be fancy and make interesting patters with a lattice or a cookie cutter or whatever. Stick the top cover to the bottom cover with cold water and seal the edge by fluting with fingers or pressing with a fork.

Cut vents. Now you may glaze with egg wash, sugar, milk, butter, orange juice... if desired.

Pie in oven at whatever your recipe says. (Often 400). Cook until pastry and filling are done. Pastry will usually cook faster than pie,

and the edges of the pastry cook faster than the middle and bottom. This can be fixed by either par-cooking the filling, or by tenting aluminum foil over the top of the crust--especially the edges.

Failure modes: You fucked with it too much. You under/overcooked it.

Friends don't let friends use prefab pie shells. Unless they're planning on using them as a "coffin," anyway.

I also promised a great basic cookie recipe. This is especially good because it's a small batch recipe: enough cookies for a snack, for me, or probably two normal people gorging on cookies. I've made a double recipe for five and had it come out about right. (About fourteen cookies to the batch, in other words.)

These were my old officemate Rohit's sugar cookies. And I transcribe his recipe exactly....

- 1/4 c. butter
- 3/4 c. sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/4 tsp vanilla (*quadruple this--ed.*)
- 1 tbsp cream
- 1 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp baking *powder* (emphasis his: some people have trust issues)
- 1/8 tsp salt (He assumes table salt: since I use kosher, I bump this up a notch)

Preheat oven to 350 F (decrease 25 degrees if you have dark baking pans)

Cream butter. Slowly, add sugar until all is incorporated and fluffy. Add egg, vanilla, and milk;* mix well. Add flour and salt; when they are combined add baking soda.

Roll between damp hands (*you could use a disher--ed.*) in 1 tbsp aliquots and deposit on cookie sheets. You can roll in sugar or cinnamon sugar as well before depositing.

Bake for 8-12 minutes. They are done when the bottoms but not the margins are light golden brown.

*I often make these as lemon or orange cookies--zest, extract--or spice cookies--for spice cookies add 2 parts ginger, 2 parts cinnamon, 1 part allspice, 1 part cardamom** and roll in cinnamon sugar. --ed.*

*that is his semicolon. We got along for a reason.

**magnitude of parts determined by taste of cookie eaters.

TAGS: [recipes](#)



[Random holiday cookie recipe is random.](#)

"Peeling Bells" cookies: This is a thing my mom used to do. 2 cups flour 6 tbsp butter 3/4 cup sugar 1

[Away with the dull drudgery of workaday tiday waves!](#)

I believe this is a significant advance in pot pie technology. Make your pie crust. Par-cook

[New England Brown Bread recipe](#)

...because my friends were talking about it on Twitter the other week, and I got hungry.

111 comments



[December 14 2010, 01:17:27 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

While I thoroughly approve of the basic pastry recipe, although my go-to is Julia Child's stand-mixer pate brisee which has mostly butter and only a bit of shortening to tenderize American hard-wheat flour, I wonder why someone would use it on chicken pot pie, which IMHO is FAR superior with a buttermilk biscuit topping!

Are you interested in the hot-water paste used to make raised, freestanding coffins? I've got a copy of *Lobscouse and Spotted Dog* and can vouch for the results.



[standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:31:13 UTC](#)


[COLLAPSE](#)

That's not a pot pie. That's a chicken cobbler. *sniffs*

Seriously. Pie is pie. It has a *bottom crust*.


There's absolutely nothing wrong with chicken and biscuits or chicken and dumplings, but it's NOT PIE.

(I have played with hot water paste. I decided it was shameful waste of calories. Conspicuous consumption Chaucer style.)


 [trinker](#)
I own an almanac. [December 14 2010, 01:36:24 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

BWAHAHAHAHA Chicken cobbler. *BWAHAHAHAHA*

Now I will have a better way to ask wait staff about the structure of their pot pie offerings. (Also, stew with a puff pastry cap is not pot pie, either. I want gooey bits of gravy-softened crust!)


 [standuponit](#)
[December 14 2010, 02:11:00 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

They're like bottom dumplings!

 [txanne](#)
[December 14 2010, 01:36:47 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


Conspicuous consumption Chaucer style.

Yes, that's pretty much why. /doffs medievalist hat


 [standuponit](#)
[December 14 2010, 02:10:35 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)
/sarcasm

[rikibeth](#)
[December 14 2010, 01:39:19 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Okay, well, I like chicken cobbler better, because the bottom crust on chicken pot pie inevitably gets soggy, even the best-made scratch crusts. Unless of course you par-bake, which is far too much trouble for something that often gets made with LEFTOVERS of a roast chicken.

 [standuponit](#)
[December 14 2010, 02:10:23 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah. I never have leftover pot pie....

 [trinker](#)
I own an almanac. [December 14 2010, 01:27:58 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh nice writeup, and I shall try the cookie recipe posthaste. (I learned the word "aliquots" right now. I'd never seen that before.)


I've never used pastry flour for pie, having learned my technique from a Midwestern grandma (of an ex-. One

of the best memories of that relationship.) I have *very* warm hands, so what I do is cut up the butter with a knife while it's very cold, plop it into the flour, cut some with two knives, and then rub really fast. (Some sources suggest that cut-in flour creates a lovely shortbread sort of texture, and rubbed leaves create flakiness. This makes sense to me.) I leave everything very rough and use the smallest amount of water I can get away with.

Unfortunately for me, mater has both frozen pie shells and pillsbury pre-made crusts in the fridge, and I suspect a war if I try to bake from scratch when I make quiche this week.

Have you read Ruhlman's "The Ratio" yet? I have some friends who are *very* excited by it. (And did I ever tell you? I've managed homemade bagels, and also spaetzle! But since leaving the South, I'm having problems making biscuits. This may be the result of not using White Lily self-rising.)



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:35:35 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I do cut my fat into 1-cm cubes before the mixing, but my incorporation technique is more squeezing than rubbing. Or was, until, well, my best friends bought me a stand mixer and I BECAME A STAND MIXER ADDICT,

I have *glommed* The Ratio. It is a good and useful and charming book.

 I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:39:48 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Squeezing, like the whole mass? Yes, that. But I smear about 1/4 of the gravel chunks, and bring the mass together very firmly, and then roll as little as possible.

I have this paranoia that my stand mixer will overwork my crust. Any opinion on using a food processor? I haven't done it, but I have friends that swear by it.

The Ratio is on my dream list for now. Everything is going into a car fund.



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:13:08 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Stand mixer has cold fingers. It will not melt the shortening.

I think food processors work fine.

Good luck on that car. I'm still holding out on the Blue Beetle, but I suspect, alas, the machine's life expectation is limited. And since I don't have the Harry Dresden excuse...

Also, climbing makes me covet a hatchback.


 I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:36:28 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I am afraid I don't know anything about Harry Dresden other than the name.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 05:39:31 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

In Dresden-world, electronics and advanced technology tend to go haywire around wizards (as a side effect of physics going a bit haywire), so Harry can't drive anything made after about WWII. Even older cars break down more often for him than for others, and his Blue Beetle spends a LOT of time in the shop.


I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 06:09:05 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

O.O ! Adding to my library queue. Thx!



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 06:18:10 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

They're very good. Watch for the polka-activated zombie dinosaur, among other astonishing things.

I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 06:26:17 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Polka...MG, if I didn't know better, I'd say you were funnin' me. But now I am primed and perky. Thanks again.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 06:41:02 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Really and truly, polka-activated zombie dinosaur. It's part of the reason that anytime anyone mentions polka, I end up saying, "Polka will never die!" Also, there's an Instant Rave spell. And incantations like, "Flickum Bicus." An agnostic Knight of the Cross. Fairies who become spies and are paid in pizza. Not to mention the emphatically straight sex-vampire who pretends to be gay to become a hairdresser as part of going on the wagon, and all his employees think Harry is his boyfriend, and then there's a short story in which he winds up LARPing a straight vampire. It all gets a bit silly, and still manages to be suspenseful and emotionally affecting. But mostly it's highly entertaining magical detective noir.



 [antongarou](#)

[December 14 2010, 14:15:40 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You forgot the god that runs a security company. Yes, I love Dresden-verse and can't wait until the next one is out :)




 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 15:28:37 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I didn't forget him, I just didn't want to mention him, because that's one that can be sneaky if the reader doesn't have a lot of background in mythology. Spoilers,

sweetie. *River Song-style wink*



 [antongarou](#)

[December 14 2010, 15:34:00 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I sometimes forget not all people read children's version mythology of every major European culture before age 10 *is embarrassed*

I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 18 2010, 19:40:02 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Ooh.

I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:41:02 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

...curse you and your *logic*! (I shall do a comparison and see. I suspect you are right. But cleaning me is easier than cleaning the stand mixer, because I am the dishwasher.)

....uh oh. I see this got orphaned in the other barrage. Pardon for the comment-flood.

 [fidelioscabinet](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:10:48 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

As for the Blue Beetle, you could always do what my nephew's wife has done for every vehicle she's had since they met: put a bumper sticker saying "Mine's paid for--is yours?"

I rarely commit pie, but I come from a family of serious pie makers on my mother's side of the family. Her grandmother once made 96 pies in a single month--just for home consumption. (To be fair, it was harvest time and haying, so it worked out to about three pies a day, for her husband, two sons, three daughters, the hired man, and a couple of hands who'd hired on for the harvest, and herself. There may have been some pie for breakfast going on there as well, if there was any left from the day before.)



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 05:28:23 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Pie for breakfast! Bear introduced me to this concept, and I am a convert.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:38:39 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)


If you use a food processor, you have to work in short pulses, and keep a close eye on it to keep from overworking, but it works very well as long as you do that.

I own
an almanac.


 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:26:11 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Do you happen to know why a food processor poses an over-working risk, but not a stand mixer?
Or is this simply a question, as  [standuponit](#) says, of not adding liquid?



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:35:27 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You can't overwork it before you add liquid (because overworking pastry dough means developing too much gluten), although you won't get the flakiness if you work the butter in too finely. It's easier to overwork in a food processor because the blade move so much faster.


I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:37:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Ah. I am enlightened thereby. Thank you.




 [barsukthom](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:43:54 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My beloved has adopted the technique of grating the "fat" before adding it to said flour. Most recently I have done this, but I, being a dreadful heretic and often in haste, sometimes melt said fat, then refrigerate the dough balls. I am bad, and will most likely go to Hel's Domain, rather than Pastrihalla...



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:13:40 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Melting will coat each individual flour grain with shortening, rather than creating those flaky plates.



 [barsukthom](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:46:33 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Shortening is a tool of the devil. Flat and flavorless it is.



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:03:19 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Shortening is a general term for fat, in this context.



 [barsukthom](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:16:20 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Ah. Sry.




 [beccastareyes](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:34:43 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My mother used to use pre-made crusts for everything, until she learned the trick of using alcohol instead of water. Now she admits that make-your-own crust tastes many times better than frozen crust, but will occasionally use those if she has too much baking and not enough time.

Also *bookmarks*




 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:37:17 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Pre made crusts are really SAD.

And the booze trick is a stroke of genius. I got it off my friends list a few years back--somebody was trying the Cooks Illustrated pie crust.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:46:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I recommend grating the butter on a cheese grater, myself. Roll the large chunk you're grating from in flour to give you some grip. Pro baking tip I got from my pastry chef at school. Works wonders.

The pot pies at NK have no bottom crust, largely because we assemble the pies ahead and bake to order, and a bottom crust really will dissolve into paste that way. We achieve a sufficient crust-to-filling ratio by using shallow dishes (those boats your poutine came in, in fact). It is a sad but necessary shortcut, as they're already labor-intensive, and I can't let the labor cost on them get any higher. They're good enough that people forgive us, mostly. (The secret is the Sauce Supreme.)



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:15:19 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

has a poutine moment

Yeah, I think you have to live with just a top crust on that front.

I par-cook everything in the filling, make gravy, and then assemble the pie and bake.

NOM.

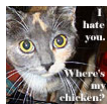


 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:27:10 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You know, you should really come back in the winter and try our pot pie, some year.

Yeah, you really have to parcook the filling. Unless it's something really delicate, like spring peas (which we had in this past spring, until we took pot pie off the menu, when it got too warm).



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:33:49 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah. The wax beans went in without other cooking. But everything else got par-cooked.


Pot pie is a production. But omg so worth it.

 [glinda_w](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:03:06 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

The pot pies at NK are so very,very tasty; no forgiveness needed. I think they've moved to the top of my list of ultimate comfort foods.




 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 01:47:50 UTC](#) Edited: [December 14 2010, 01:48:07 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh! And I keep wanting to infuse rendered duck fat with a vanilla bean, and use *that* for sweet pastry.

Deleted comment




 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:27:37 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Deliciousness is my job.



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:33:07 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I want that on a t-shirt. But first I need a new job.

Hey, are you hiring?

...nah, I wouldn't leave the Harpy.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:36:34 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Maybe I'll put it on the next NK shirts. I really need to order some. And then I could send you one.

You should get the Harpy to come, too, that's all. Didn't she say her wife's in academia? We've got a ton of universities....



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:05:28 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

....

Harpy? How do you feel about food service?

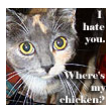


 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:20:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh, I'm sure we can find her some other awesome job. I'm not sure she's mad enough about cooking to put up with the idiocies of restaurant life.

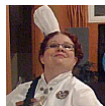
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 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:15:54 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm enroute.



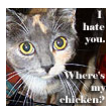
 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 02:34:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Oo, hey, I'm studying Russian cuisine. I'm doing a feast for Catherynne Valente's upcoming book *Deathless*, so it's for that. TxAnne gave me a recipe for mushrooms in sour cream, and it is OMG GOOD. You should try it sometime. Makes a great dip for bread, or pasta topping. Mmm.

Take some mushrooms. Any kind. Several kinds. Saute in butter with S&P until they start to shrivel a little, and get all golden brown and yummy. Maybe deglaze it with a little sherry or wine (I like Amontillado, and then I get to say, "For the love of God, Montessoro!"). Add sour cream, warm slowly until the mushrooms are all plump again and the sour cream is full of caramelized mushroomy goodness. NOM enthusiastically.

Another idea has occurred to me: gold beet borscht. Because OMG COLOR.



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:06:14 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

OMG NOM.

Gold beet borscht is nice, but it is not krasniy.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:18:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I don't know what krasniy means (and a quick google isn't fixing that), but it's not at all traditional. I just think it would be pretty. It's not for the feast (although that's going to be somewhat nontraditional and fusiony, due to thematic necessity {and damn, do I want somebody to geek over that with, but the book isn't out until March, and I don't want to spoil it for people}), it's just a passing thought.

Really, what I'd want to do is make red AND gold borschts, and scatter drops of one across the other, or (if they're thick enough) put them side-by-side in one bowl, or maybe have a divided bowl, or something. Mmm. Brilliantly-colored food.

 [asciikitty](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:25:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

with a dollop of sour cream in the middle, as a divide.

mmm... borscht.



[standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:28:44 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Win.



[asciikitty](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:32:28 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

my cousin once made some kind of fancy egg white and squid ink yin yang omelet for something at Trump Towers, and I've been wanting to do something with that idea (that didn't involve squid ink) ever since.



[inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:05:10 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Why no squid ink? Squid ink is awesome!



[asciikitty](#)

[December 14 2010, 12:53:02 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Well. And no egg white only omelets for me. So some other set of things for coloring.

(and also in part because one of the people with whom I commit food weirdness keeps kosher, which squid ink isn't. But there's always the "do it when she's not around" concept, which is how we pulled off the bacon pie)

I own
an almanac.



[trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:35:03 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I love the amount of synchronicity here, although poor MG may have felt flooded.



[inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:37:07 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Nevar! I love this sort of thing.



[inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:38:01 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I seem to have gotten Russian cuisine all over your pastry post. Should I apologize?



[inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:36:30 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yes!


Maybe a frond of fresh dill? Or would that be too much? *ponder*




[asciikitty](#)

dill is never "too much"


(I bet you *could* feed me too much dill. but noone ever has)

 [inaurolillium](#)
December 14 2010, 03:46:19 UTC COLLAPSE

"Too much" in this context does not mean too much dill, it means too much twee and/or froufrou.

 [inaurolillium](#)
December 14 2010, 03:48:59 UTC COLLAPSE


Sometimes I take a nice oily fish and make stew of it with sour cream and dill. I think I may have been cooking Russian without knowing it.

 [trinker](#)
I own
an almanac. December 14 2010, 04:42:03 UTC COLLAPSE


Yes.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukha> (check out the spice profile!)

<http://www.russianfoods.com/recipes/item001D8/default.asp> has a goose recipe, btw. I don't agree with all her recipes, but they're recognizable. (I think she under spices.


 [inaurolillium](#)
December 14 2010, 05:12:28 UTC COLLAPSE

Thanks!


 [matociquala](#)
December 14 2010, 03:56:19 UTC COLLAPSE

YOU CAN MAKE BORSCHT WITHOUT DILL?

Not in THIS Ukrainian household.

 [inaurolillium](#)
December 14 2010, 04:04:33 UTC COLLAPSE

Not suggesting making it without dill. Pondering whether or not to stick a front of dill upright in the sour cream.


 [matociquala](#)
December 14 2010, 04:08:15 UTC COLLAPSE

YS PLS.

Some to the decadent east, and I will take you to Veselka.

<http://www.veselka.com/>



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:13:27 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm planning on another Boston visit in June, I think. Perhaps a side-trip then?


I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:20:22 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

There is at least one excellent Russian market in the Boston area. Berezka. (I think that's how they spell it. I remember it in Cyrillic.) I loved shopping there.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:22:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

There's GOT to be one in Seattle. We actually have a large Russian population. Russian community center and everything. *goes to google*


I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:32:50 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm sure there's a big Russian market in Seattle. (Although it may cater more to Old Russians? I'm more familiar with the new (post 1975) immigrant populations, which are very Jewish, and the post perestroika Russians, who are very modern/postSoviet.)

I'm afraid my Russian familiarity is all California and the East Coast. Oh, you should know, for some reason perhaps pertaining to the Cold War, most of the places I found all said, "European" instead of Russian. And they varied from echt Russiy (okay, I'm deliberately mixing languages here. ;) to Croats, Poles, Latvians, etc. all doing "Russian". This may or may not matter to you.

 [matociquala](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:24:34 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


I'd love to hang out.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:35:32 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

So would I. I thought about saying something this time, but there was other family involved, and the family politics of side trips get complicated, so I skipped it.

 [matociquala](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:41:19 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Fret not.




 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:21:32 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Also, now that I have seen it, I have ordered the Veselka cookbook. Thanks for the pointer!



 [standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:28:07 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Krasniy means red. And also "beautiful." Which tells you something about Russia.

Feast? Are you celebrating the advent?

What book?



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:45:16 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It will be in May, so no Advent. I'm just getting a jump on planning.

The book is *Deathless*, a retelling of the story of Marya Morevna and Koschei the Deathless set in Soviet Russia. It has domoviye who formed a komityet! And many wonderful eggs! And Baba Yaga! And birds who turn into husbands! And knitted soldiers! It is made of WIN and AWESOME and may be my favorite thing she's ever written. (Apologies for any abject failure at Russian spelling.) And my food can actually reinforce a theme of the book! *dances the dance of joy*

Aha. I am enlightened. It might not be red, but it will be beautiful. Especially next to the red.

Oh! One of these days, I must make the edible amber that's been brewing in the back of my mind for years.

I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:18:23 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Can you source birch sap? It's very Russian (instead of maple).



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:24:19 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I can try! Thanks for the tip.

I own
an almanac.

 [trinker](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:31:07 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


krasniy means both 'red' and 'beautiful' in Russian.

If you want to talk Russian food, I'd love to geek about it.

Divided bowl. Or, make a dam with the smetana (*good* Russian sour cream!) in the center of the bowl (I'm thinking piping would be least messy/easiest production wise), pour one color on each side.

Fresh Dill over All The Things. (Well, maybe not the borscht. But I've never heard a Russian complain about too much dill.)



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:52:47 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Oh! Piped smetana! That's it, that's brilliant! Eee! Thank you!

Yes, yes, totally looking for people to talk Russian food with.

Like I need to find ways to make goose confit and corned or pickled beef tongue Russian in flavor profile. So I'm trying to get inside the head of the cuisine, as it were. I think with the confit, I'll probably make it, then reheat it and serve with vegetables and sour cream and dill, or something.



[matociquala](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:00:01 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

With Russian, do you include Ukrainian?

Dill and beef. Beef and dill. Caraway.

And kasha.



 [inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 04:12:04 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yes. I am totally going to borrow from everything even vaguely in that area that's related. Marya Morevna may be from Saint Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad, but Koschei's country is clearly Somewhere Else, and borders on Many Places.

Dill, I knew about. I've got a note in my file: Dill Everything. Hm. Use [this](#) as a starting point, only swap out cinnamon and ginger and cloves for dill and caraway and . . . what else? Hrm. I think the juniper berries and mustard seeds and peppercorns can stay. What about the bay leaves and the allspice? Actually I think allspice with the caraway might be interesting. Hrm.

And there I go, thinking out loud in pixels again.

I own
an almanac.



[trinker](#)


[December 14 2010, 04:16:32 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

SQUEE Okay, I am so bouncy over this that it's ridiculous. (I'm glad you like my piped smetana idea.)

As far as Russian flavor profile, the question to me is whether you're aiming for Imperial, Ukrainian, Jewish, cosmopolitan modern...? It's all a little different. Essential Russian/Ukrainian flavors (they need to be modified for various variants, obv.) - pork fat, dill, vinegar, smetana, mushrooms, cucumbers in many forms, butter, more dill, fish fish fish (dried, broiled, pickled, soup, etc.). Corned beef tongue, I need to think about, but I think there are some classic options. Mayonnaise salads are common, did you know that? I think of goose as more Polish, but that might not be accurate. Not very much mixing fruit and meat, which is unfortunate.


I'll scare up some weblinks for you (vetted thru my sense of what's proper), too.

 [inaurolillium](#)
[December 14 2010, 04:28:31 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I can borrow from any of it, and am not focusing on anything in particular. I have explicit permission from Cat to be fusiony, and it's supposed to be a feast ordered by a supernatural being whose country borders on all places, so pretty much any of it would make some sense. Goose stew is named in the text, and would be damned tasty so I was to keep it, and it's just matter of finding a way to make it both Russian flavored and in harmony with Spoilery Thematic Thing.

 [trinker](#)
I own
an almanac. [December 14 2010, 04:49:22 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


Ah ha! In which case, Russians *love* Georgian and Central Asian food, too. And Polish would not be too far afield, methinks.

 [inaurolillium](#)
[December 14 2010, 05:13:49 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


I already have Georgian on the list. I'll look into the others. Thanks again.

 [trinker](#)
I own
an almanac. [December 14 2010, 06:11:53 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Most welcome. Please keep me in the loop for any more food geeing, esp. Russian.

 [inaurolillium](#)
[December 14 2010, 06:23:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Will do!

 [antongarou](#)
[December 14 2010, 14:32:25 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

have you considered pilaf?The Russians stole it from Central Asia and ran away with it. Also, if you are partial to Polish Jew cookery then my grandmother used to make almond cookies and a chocolate cake that uses ground almonds instead of flour.



[!\[\]\(2bdfe261b986065ee0ac76460d6528c9_img.jpg\) inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 15:26:54 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm doing kasha. It's in the book. I might pilaf the kasha, though.



[!\[\]\(c694a3ff3b077d76910920a6a1593ab4_img.jpg\) antongarou](#)

[December 14 2010, 15:50:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

That sounds nommish:). Also, I saw a reference to Persian rice "cakes" in several of our local cooking programs- and they sound like something that might fit a feast like that as an exotic dish(IIRC nobility of the time were big on "exotic").

The basic idea is that you take a pot whose mouth is wider then its bottom, half cook however much rice you want, drain, form a base from halved potatoes and onions and then fry them. When the onions and potatoes are good and browned you add the rice with whatever other surprises you want(dried cranberries, raisins, etc) fry for a couple more minutes, add a bit of water(the one recipe I chased up marked 1/3 cup for 3 cups rice), cook for a few minutes on high then put on very low for an hour or two until ready. then you turn the pot over onto a plate and garnish with whatever you want to.

[!\[\]\(dd161862f9164df98f62b726e9846241_img.jpg\) dichroic](#)

[December 14 2010, 10:21:22 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Hey, I bet that would work with the special 24-hour yogurt that is the only dairy my MIL is allowed to eat! (Makes note of recipe.)

[!\[\]\(626ce8ac21792b9405bfddfea8e0c96a_img.jpg\) dichroic](#)

[December 14 2010, 10:22:22 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh, duh. Except for the butter. Drat. Still, maybe with olive oil.



[!\[\]\(c1168d6a8b365d11e842ece304635fa7_img.jpg\) inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 12:20:09 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Duck fat, or goose, would be tastier in this application.

[!\[\]\(40770d9ed6ed4f1222ebf89a1396e8b2_img.jpg\) dichroic](#)

[December 14 2010, 12:24:10 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I was just informed that you can buy jars of it here in the Netherlands. Is that true in the US as well? I don't expect to be cooking a duck or goose anytime soon :-)

Given the difficult dietary constraints we'll be dealing with this Christmas (assorted family members, very compatible themselves but their food needs aren't), extra types of fat would be handy to have

around. Hm.....wonder if duck fat + almond flour would = savory graham-cracker-style bottom crust for a pot pie?



[inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 12:33:51 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

You can buy tubs of it, yes. And while I've never tried making a graham-cracker-style crust with almond flour, I can't think offhand why it wouldn't work.

[glinda_w](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:06:48 UTC](#)

Edited: [December 14 2010, 03:07:55 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I think I need a copy of *The Boston Cooking School Cookbook*. (My kitchen Bibles are *Joy of Cooking* (1970s edition); *Laurel's Kitchen* (original edition), and *The Alice's Restaurant Cookbook* (for attitude). My mother had a '30s edition of Fannie Farmer, but I didn't hang onto it; the amount of shelf space a Braille cookbook takes up is prohibitive. *wry*

edited to change userpic. What was I thinking, to use any other for this thread? *grin*



[standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 03:14:44 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I have a 1940's edition. And also the Fannie Farmer cookbook. Both useful items.

Deleted comment



[inaurolillium](#)

[December 14 2010, 08:02:10 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

You can, in fact, do gluten-free pastry dough. [Here](#). [And there's this one](#). [And here, in fact, is a GF chicken pot pie recipe](#).



[antongarou](#)

[December 14 2010, 14:39:13 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Cool trick with the alcohol- will flavored liquors work as well?I have a bottle of homemade apple liquor that <lj username="hagar-972"> committed and am wondering. Also, how do I know the amount of venting I need to create?



[standuponit](#)

[December 14 2010, 15:00:43 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Liqueurs are mostly sugar and water, so probably not. It should be something 80 proof or more, and not sweet.


Re: venting: You cut some vents. Three or four, usually. It's not rocket science.

[mama_abbie](#)


[December 15 2010, 00:33:26 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Husband uses apple jack for apple pie. I think he picked it up from Brother Alton.

 [trinker](#)
I own
an almanac. [December 18 2010, 19:37:15 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

...but not for the crust, right? For the filling?

 [mama_abbie](#)
[December 19 2010, 19:10:55 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

No For the crust- instead of water. Alcohol instead of water makes for less gluten strings, equals flakier crust. (Plus a nice bit of apple flavor in crust.)

Deleted comment



 [standupontit](#)
[December 15 2010, 17:31:39 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Hi there. Welcome back!

Ooo. Leaf lard.


[Gluten-free?](#)
 [dorford](#)
[May 1 2011, 09:31:03 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

On my daughter's behalf, I ask if you have any comments on using gluten-free flours? On my behalf, do you have tips on making Cornish pasties? I did try before I read your pastry primer, so that should help a lot.

 **[Re: Gluten-free?](#)**
 [standupontit](#)
[May 1 2011, 14:13:08 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm afraid I don't have much practical experience with gluten-free cooking. I am all, "gluten! yummy!" and in fact put extra gluten in things to make them yummiier.

Pasties? Um. Fold over filling, seal with fork, egg wash? What sort of tips do you need?

[Re: Gluten-free?](#)
 [dorford](#)
[May 2 2011, 07:54:16 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Well, I hadn't thought of the egg wash, so I think that's a good tip. My mother and I decided on the filling, mainly ground mutton, carrots, peas. Is an egg wash just egg or do I mix it with milk or something?

 **[Re: Gluten-free?](#)**
 [standupontit](#)
[May 2 2011, 14:47:22 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Either. You can find all kinds of instructions on the internet.

Random holiday cookie recipe is random.

"Peeling Bells" cookies: This is a thing my mom used to do. 2 cups flour 6 tbsp butter 3/4 cup sugar 1

Away with the dull drudgery of workaday tiday waves!

I believe this is a significant advance in pot pie technology. Make your pie crust. Par-cook

New England Brown Bread recipe

...because my friends were talking about it on Twitter the other week, and I got hungry.